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HISTORY OF BRIMFIELD.

AN ADDRESS BY

DR. A. M. SHERMAN,

—OF KENT.—

DELIVERED AT BRIMFIELD, PORTAGE CO., O.

JULY 4TH, 1881.

Our Pioneer Fathers and Mothers : Where are They ?

*" One by one the links are broken,
One by one these veterans fall."*

PRICE, 25 CENTS.

KENT BULLETIN PRINT.



HISTORY OF BRIMFIELD.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW CITIZENS: To-day the entire nation is in mourning and the lovers of liberty throughout the world are tendering their kind offices of sympathy to a grief-stricken people. The life of the President of the United States hangs, as it were, by a silken cord, put in jeopardy by the cowardly hand of a base assassin. Shocked as we all have been by the sad calamity and centered as our chief thoughts are on what may be the final results of the terrible misfortune that has befallen our nation, I am unfit to speak to you and you are unprepared to hear what I might say to you. It is thought best, however, by your Committee, that the arranged program be not interfered with; I therefore ask your indulgence while I attempt to proceed with the duties assigned me.

A hundred and five years ago to-day the American Republic was born. A hundred and four anniversaries have celebrated a nation's birthday. A hundred years ago witnessed an infant republic struggling for existence, founded on the immutable truth of man's sovereignty, an object of the sneers and derisive scorn of the crowned heads and autocrats of all Europe. A hundred years have witnessed the unparalleled growth and development of that infant republic, until to-day it stands forth among the nations of the earth in all the essential elements of true greatness, the most powerful nation in the world. This rapid growth and development has not only challenged the wonder but the admiration of the civilized world. A hundred years have been making us a national history, the glory and fame of which is being proclaimed to-day by thousands of orators to an intelligent and grateful people. The causes that have conspired to the grand result are still a mystery to the nations of the old world and are but partially appreciated and understood by a vast majority of even the native-born citizens of this republic. We have become so accustomed to the marvelous changes in this country, to the rapid growth and magnificent development of the various enterprises in which our people are engaged, that we are quite willing to accept results, without inquiring into their causes. Young America, with an irresistible spirit of enterprise, has so far outstripped the habits and customs of the fathers that speed and impulse have taken the place of calm deliberation and patient details. Our advanced civilization, with its increasing demands, are constantly stimulating new methods for supplying our present and future wants. The tendency of to-day, is to discard the old and accept whatever is new. We should remember that old methods have a value and that experience is a wise teacher.

On this national anniversary day of our country's glory, where fifty millions of grateful people are celebrating the unparalleled advantages enjoyed in this model republic, when orators are eulogizing our government as the best the world has ever seen, and historians are recounting and rehearsing the mighty deeds of the heroic living and dead, how appropriate that you, quiet citizens of Brimfield, should assemble here to-day, to consider what you and your fathers and mothers have done in this quiet community, that has contributed to your country's greatness and to your present peace and prosperity. You have been making history, silent and unwritten though it may have been. The deeds of great men and great acts are incorporated into the written history of our country, while the silent forces that have made great achievements possible are often left unmentioned and unwritten. If what are counted the little things of this world and what are regarded the unimportant things of life could have been put into print and we could peruse them as we do the more notable facts of history, how we should appreciate them as making up the true history of our lives and really the most important factors of an accurate history of every community. The silent, unwritten deeds of individuals, as well as of communities, have been

sadly neglected. Memory, the greatest gift God has bestowed upon his children, has been entrusted with a volume of unwritten facts and incidents, that should find a place in books and help furnish a library of imperishable records, that shall profit and bless the coming generations. For memory, precious as is the gift, and varied as is its storehouse, must finally yield to that inexorable law that is inscribed on all earthly things, *perishable*.

We have come here to-day, my friends, to revive our recollections, to ask ourselves, in the presence of the young here assembled, to whom are we indebted for the pleasant homes we enjoy, the peace and general prosperity that surrounds us as a community on every hand?

On this national holiday you have been accustomed to feel more patriotic, and to express your devotion and loyalty to your country, in a manner in keeping with the object for which the day was instituted. You have heard discussed time and again, the great principles on which our government is founded, the sacrifices endured by our revolutionary fathers, the many obstacles they had to encounter, and the noble heroism displayed on the fields of hard-fought battles. You have often read the history of our government, and you have been educated to love and revere it. This is all right. No loyal citizen can fail to honor and respect the government that affords him protection. But, have we not been accustomed to look to Washington and Columbus, as the places whence emanates all the law that governs this great and prosperous people. Have we not attached more importance to statutory provisions, than to that great unwritten law that forms the basis of good society and governs every well regulated community. Good government is not always the outgrowth of wise legislation. Let us not lose sight of the fact that a virtuous and prosperous community, are often a law unto themselves. While I would not have you less patriotic to-day, than on former national anniversaries, nor less loyal to the great and good government that has afforded you such protection, I shall ask you to forget, for a time, Washington and Columbus, National and State legislatures, and confine your thoughts for a brief hour, at least, to Brimfield. To what are you, citizens of Brimfield, indebted for your pleasant, happy homes, for the good order and peace here enjoyed and for your present prosperity? Who has governed Brimfield? A noted divine has aptly said, that the religious world has made a great mistake in placing Heaven so far away in the distant future, and suggests, that if we would bring it nearer to us, we should appreciate it better and enjoy it more. So, my friends, if, instead of looking to Washington and Columbus, and wise legislation for the true source of our prosperity and happiness, we should look at home and feel that we are really the governing power, that our intelligence, energy, industry, enterprise and good behavior are the true source of our greatness, we would appreciate our privileges more and enjoy them better. As a community, you are what you have made yourselves.

It is my purpose to-day, fellow citizens, to narrate some of the causes that have conspired to make you what you are; in other words, to give you as best I can in the limited time allowed me for preparation, a brief history of Brimfield. To give such a history, as will be interesting to the old and young, is no light task. I have been an observer of the growth and prosperity of your township for the past fifty years. I shall therefore aim to give you such a history in part as has come under my own observation. But no history will do you justice that does not antedate fifty years. Indeed, the most interesting parts are incidents that occurred prior to 1831. I should be untrue and unjust to the memory of those heroic men and women, whose memories you come here to-day to revere, should I pass them by in silence. What I may say of events that occurred prior to 1831, will be largely hearsay, as there is little or no written evidence to verify what I shall say, and but few living witnesses. I trust you will pardon me, if I relate some anecdotes that I have heard concerning the earlier settlers, some of which may be thought to reflect on the proprieties of life, as we view things to-day. I shall give brief biographical sketches of some of the pioneers, possibly some of whom are with us here to-day. It is to be lamented, that much that should have been written and handed down to future generations as a rich legacy, has been permitted to pass into the great ocean of forgetfulness. I trust that it is not too late, even now, to put on record some facts, some of the worthy deeds of the pioneer heroes, who so bravely battled

the difficulties and adversities of the earlier settlers in this community, that something may yet be done that shall perpetuate the names and deeds of those self-sacrificing men and women, who toiled that you might live and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Gratitude would dictate that their names should not perish, but rather that their names should be inscribed on imperishable granite, that even unborn generations may know whose memory to revere and cherish. Such can, such ought to be done.

Brimfield has a territory of five miles square, or 25 square miles, containing 16,000 acres of land. The virgin soil was fully equal to the average townships in this county, though not so regarded at the time of its first settlement. The original proprietors of the township were Israel Thorndike, a merchant of Boston, Mass., and John Wyles, of Brimfield, Mass. In 1816 they came to this place, then an unbroken wilderness, inhabited only by wild beasts, and divided their interests. Thorndike taking the north half, and Wyles the south half of the township. At that time most of the townships in this county, but especially those adjoining Brimfield, contained some settlers. Soon after the division, made by Thorndike and Wyles, Henry Thorndike, a nephew of the proprietor, came here to act as his uncle's agent. Arba Twitchel, who came with him, was hired to make a clearing, which he did on the old Boszor hill, a half mile north of the center. Arba Twitchel was then a single man, who had been in the employ of Thorndike at his home in Jeffrey, New Hampshire. To Arba Twitchel then, belongs the honor of making the first improvement in this township. In June, 1816, the first permanent settler made his appearance here, in the person of John Boosinger. He came here from Ravenna, with his wife and two children, and settled in the west and south part of the township. His little cabin, rude and uninviting as it was, was the first home of any white man in Brimfield. It is true that a squatter, by the name of Simcox, had preceded him, but he never was regarded as a citizen, and only remained a short time.

In June, 1816, the unbroken wilderness of Brimfield began to give way to the well directed blows of the axe, in the hands of John Boosinger, Sr. Where he began, he remained for nearly sixty years, hale and vigorous, to enjoy the fruits of his toil, and finally went to his reward across the River, after having completed his four score and ten years.

In November, 1816, came Henry Thorndike, with his family, and settled on what is now better known as the Dea. Henry Hall farm. He was a man of much business ability and done much towards the early settling of the township. The same Fall his brother Israel came. He was a bachelor, but soon afterwards married a daughter of Martin Kent, of Suffield, by whom they had one son, who is now living in Toledo. Herbert Thorndike is the only one of the name who remains to represent a family to whom the first settlers were much indebted for employment and help in time of need. In November of the same year, came Abner H. Lanphare. He was a single man, who came on foot from Windsor Co., Vermont. He lived in the Thorndike families for a time, while he remained single.

Up to January 1, 1817, Brimfield contained the following persons: John Boosinger, wife and two children; Henry Thorndike and wife; Israel Thorndike, Arba Twitchel, Abner H. Lanphare.

In January, 1817, Dea. Alpheus Andrews came into town with his wife, from Rootstown. Mr. Thorndike, who was exceedingly anxious for the rapid settlement of his township, made a proposition that the first child born in the township should receive from him a present of eighty acres of land. Competition possibly might have been a little active, but there were few competitors. Uncle Alf, thinking that he had some unmistakable evidence that he might be the successful winner of the prize offered, straightway took his axe and commenced chopping out a roadway from Rootstown to this place, as there was at that time no road in town. They took up their abode at the Center, and patiently awaited future developments. On the 17th of April, following, their hopes were realized. A son was born, and Uncle Alf was declared the winner of the Thorndike prize. Lanphare, who always delighted in making himself useful, was a boarder in Uncle Alf's family. He well knew that important coming events frequently cast their shadows before, so, taking the hint, had prepared some hickory torches against

the time of need. Thorndike was the owner of a fine pair of black horses, who picked their living in the woods; on one he had placed a bell. The 17th of April was a dark, rainy night, the alarm was sounded, and Lanphare at once lit his torch and listened for the sound of the bell. The horse was soon secured, and he and his rider were soon on their way to the center of Randolph for a doctor. There being no road, and only marked trees for a guide, the journey was slow and tedious. His route was to near Sandy Lake, thence to center of Rootstown, and from there to Randolph, that being the only feasible route. Lanphare said the music of the wolves, together with his music, on that lonely ride, made quite an interesting evening concert. On their arrival the next day at Uncle Alf's cabin, they had the pleasure of greeting the new born son, the first born of Brimfield. Dr. Belding retraced his steps, and Uncle Alf, no doubt sung his favorite tune, *China*. Soon after the happy event mentioned, Dea. Andrews demanded of Thorndike his 80 acres of land, but as they could not agree on the location, there was much delay, and during the controversy the child died. The father did not consider that his fault, and a compromise was finally effected by giving him 40 acres here at the Center, where he lived and died Oct. 30, 1842.

During the year 1817, there was a large accession to Brimfield's population, among whom were the following persons: Reuben Hall, Peter Wolferd, Thos. Rice, John Williard, John Twitchel, Samuel Thompson, Henry Boszer, Erasmus Flower, Jacob Hall, Capt. Uriah Sawyer, Jerrimiah Moulton, Alpheus Underwood, Harrison G. Moulton, Abner Moulton, John V. Gardner, John K. Chapman, John Furry, Benjamin Mallory, Champlain Minard, Nathaniel Packard, Henry Hall, David Coburn, David Thompson and Jonathan Thompson. In 1818, came Asa Sawyer, Wm. Smith, Frederick Jones, Lyman Barber, Edwin Barber, Jonathan Law and E. A. Palmer. In 1819, Amos Benedict, Selah Hart, Peter Osborn, Benjamin Hall and his son, Wm. Hall. In 1820, Wm. Davidson, Jerrimiah Pike and Dr. Lincoln. In 1821, Guy Doolittle and Capt. Constance Chapman. In 1825, came Dea. Harmon Bradley, James Blake and Julius Blake.

The 50 names that I have mentioned, most of whom were heads of families when they came, constituted the permanent citizens of Brimfield up to 1826; some of them had large families when they came. These people were nearly all of New England stock, and I venture the assertion, that a braver, more industrious and better set of men and women could not be found in any community than were those hardy pioneers. We, of to-day, know nothing, nor never can know, of the privations, hardships, and sacrifices they endured. They left homes and friends of their childhood, in rugged New England, and started for this wilderness, with but little money; some with ox teams, occasionally one with a horse and wagon, with their children and their little all. They came with brave hearts and willing hands, to seek a home that they could call their own. It was not simply a spirit of adventure that prompted the undertaking. Far from it. To own a home, if ever so humble, the grandest desire of the human heart, was the chief motive that prompted the great undertaking. And how they were rewarded, their subsequent history tells you. Nearly every one of these men succeeded, by patient toil, and a rigid economy, in securing a good home, and most of them lived to a ripe old age, to enjoy the fruits of their labors, and died as they had lived, honored and respected by all who knew them. A few, *very* few, yet remain. Another decade will witness the departure of the last one of them. Another generation has taken their places. Many of the children of these venerable sires are now numbered among your best citizens. Some of the old homesteads are still occupied by their kindred, and still preserve the family name. Others have entirely changed and passed into the hands of strangers. Some are here to-day, who can remember Brimfield as an unbroken wilderness, with here and there a log cabin, a home of contentment, a time when there was not a frame house in town, nor even a laid-out road. Some can remember just how Brimfield looked 65 years ago. Some are here to-day, who have been living witnesses of the marvelous changes that have taken place since that time, and who have been active participants in helping make these changes. The veteran pioneers who still remain, and their children, especially those who came here with their parents, can look back over the past 60 or 65 years and

what must be their reflections. What untold memories crowd their minds. A forbidding wilderness, by the well directed efforts of their sires, aided by their own help, has been made to blossom as the rose. To-day, we see on every hand, peace, prosperity, enterprise and contentment. To whom are you, young men and women, indebted for this? Did not the sturdy pioneer fathers and mothers whom I have mentioned, prepare the way for your present enjoyment? To-day you plough and sow, you reap and mow, but not as your fathers did.

From 1826 to 1831, several families moved into town and added largely to the then rude settlement, of whose names I will make brief mention.

From 1831 to 1840, large additions and many improvements were made, of which I shall speak in due time. These additions and improvements have come under my own personal observations, and I shall endeavor, therefore, to give my own recollections of Brimfield for the past 50 years.

On the 5th day of June, 1831, just 50 years ago, I first saw Brimfield, and although only a lad of five years old, no event of my life is clearer in memory than that beautiful Sunday when we halted at noon in the road not five rods from where we are now assembled. The people who were attending church in the old Town House, were just emerging from the door. I well remember how they appeared. They were not clothed as in ancient times, in purple and fine linen, neither were they clad in the gaudy fashions of to-day. The men and boys were clad in tow pants and vests, many without coats, and many barefooted. The women and girls were dressed much alike, blue calico dresses and sun bonnets were the prevailing fashion. I don't remember of seeing a girl with *banged hair* that day. Combs and brushes may not have been as freely used then as now, but the hair remained as God intended it should, a beautiful ornament to the head, instead of an unsightly mass, as we too often see to-day. After receiving the congratulations of some friends and many strangers, our family at once repaired to the plain, but hospitable home of the late Abel Burt, who was an old acquaintance of my parents, and after a three days' visit at Mr. Burt's, we took up our abode in the old log house on the old homestead, to me of blessed memories.

And now, my friends, I shall attempt to tell you who lived in Brimfield at that time. I believe I am able to tell you the name of every family and where they lived. If I make any mistakes I shall be quite willing to be corrected. Those of you, who can remember, please go with me, in memory, to the north-west corner of the township. We first find the family of Edward Russel; coming to the Mogadore road, we find on the hill, Uncle Asa Sawyer, next, his son, Esq. Asa Sawyer; passing west from the corners, Benjamin Mallory, John Furry and John Chapman; returning and coming south, Capt. Uriah Sawyer and Uncle Sammy Thompson; going west from the corners, Reuben Hart, Amos Benedict, Jonathan Law; at the corners, Selah Hart, Jacob Hall, Erastus Flowers, Edwin Barber, Guy Doolittle and Julius Blake; further south on the corners, was Philo Taylor, next, Joseph Gilbreath, John Gilbreath and Barnat Stilwell; commencing at the north line again, we find Dea. Harmon Bradley, Arba Twitchel, the Wolford family on the Henry Boszor farm, Wm. Hall and father, Benjamin Hall, Dea. Henry Hall, Reuben Hall, Oliver Sawyer; south at the corners, Cone Andrews, south, John Boosinger, Harris Sherman; south on the hill, Wm. James, John Shelhorn; a little west, Wm. Davidson, and south of him, Wm. Spaulding; following the east and west road, south from the center, was Conrad Fowser, Samuel Myers, Peter Osborn; south of the corners, Thomas Parsons, Dea. Edward Parsons, Moses Birge and Peter Hockobout; east from the corners there was no house for two miles; north from the corners, towards the center, was Sullivan Moulton, Geo. Moulton, Anson Moulton, Augustus Moulton, Geo. Price, Wm. Price, Jonathan Price; west from the center, Solomon Carver, Henry Sawyer, Hiram King, Dr. Lincoln, Abel Forcha and Benj. Haynes; north from the center, were Martin T. Hackett, Nathaniel Beasley, Henry Boszor, Nathaniel Packard and Champlin Minard; at the center, Dea. Alpheus Andrews; east, Widow Harrison, G. Moulton, Capt. Chapman, Harry Chapman, Joseph Chapman, Abner H. Lanphare, James Blake, Orrin Blake, Judge Jerimiah Moulton, Sluman Able, E. A. Palmer and Alpheus Underwood; south on the diagonal road, David Coburn, John V. Gardner and Abel Burt; north of Gardner, was Isaac Osborn, Jerimiah Pike, Andrew Coosard,

John Hill; east from the corners, were Albert Underwood, Lybia Underwood, Augustus Minard and David Fuller; north from the corners, Freeman Underwood, Frederick Jones, Wm. Smith, Martin Edson, Huedang Hall, Benjamin Cady, Elisha Burnett and Isaac Ives; in the north-east corner of the town, were Levi Stoddard, Thomas Cartwright, Lucius Edson, Joseph Williard, Frederick Moore, Lyman Barber, Benjamin Edson, Beverly Y. Russ, and Chauncey Isbell. If I have omitted any that were then residents, it is because my memory is deficient. And now, my friends, as we have traveled over your township together and have seen who lived here 50 years ago and where they lived, I ask you to make the journey with me again, and let us see who fills their places. The journey may not be as pleasant as before, but it may be profitable. Mingled emotions of pleasure and sadness will fill your minds, as you reflect on *then* and *now*. A half century has passed since then. The Angel of Death has called at nearly every home and secured a prize. *Absent* from the old home, will be the silent response to our inquiry—from nearly every homestead. The familiar faces of 50 years ago, are only now seen through a glass darkly.

Well may we ask ourselves, to-day,
Our fathers and mothers, where are they?
In our silent meditation, comes the answer,
One by one, the links have been broken,
One by one, these veterans have fallen.

Surely may we conclude "that the places that once knew them shall know them no more forever."

But let us commence our second journey. Edward Russell had a large family. He and his son Edward are all that remain in town. Uncle Asa Sawyer, on the hill, also had a large family. The old homestead is now occupied by his youngest daughter, Mrs. A. J. Shuman. Asa Sawyer, Jr., with his wife, still occupy their home of 50 years ago. Benjamin Malory and wife are both gone, their son, Aaron, being the only surviving member of that family. John Furry and wife are gone, Mrs. E. A. Russell being the only member of that family now living in town. John K. Chapman's family are all gone. Capt. Uriah Sawyer and wife have been dead many years. Capt. Sawyer was a man whom you all remember, a man of wonderful industry and great endurance. I doubt if any man in Brimfield ever worked more hours and more steadily than did he. He and his wife were always busy and the large family partook of the same disposition. On the farm by day and in the shop at night for many years. His shop was not like Solomon's Temple of old, where the sound of the axe, hammer or any tool of iron was never heard. His three sons living, can testify to the music of that cooper shop for many long years. The old home looks desolate indeed, when compared to the time it contained a large Sawyer family. Uncle Sammy Thompson, as he was familiarly called, who lived on the Waldron farm, left 40 years ago for Indiana. He was quite an eccentric man and had a habit of talking to himself. It is said of him, that one time he went to Middlebury to do some trading; while there, a terrible rain storm came up. He did not leave for home until long after dark. During the day he had imbibed pretty freely of *fire water*, then in common use, and could not tell exactly where he was. Roswell Kent, a merchant on his way home that night, thought he heard a noise by the roadside and heard a man talking. Turning his old tin lantern in the direction of the noise, he saw a man splashing in the puddle of water; seeing who it was, he said, "what are you doing down here, Uncle Sammy." Quick as thought came the reply: "Studying navigation, sir. Get aboard." He was a generous, kind-hearted old man, whose home for years was a sort of rendezvous for Methodist preachers.

Selah Hart, on the corners, died many years ago; his wife is still occupying the old home. Reuben Hart and wife still remain an unbroken family. Jonathan Law's family are all gone, except Mrs. Reuben Hart. Amos Benedict still survives, but is a non-resident. Uncle Jacob Hall and wife passed away many years ago. I remember many anecdotes told of him. He was in the British service, and was taken prisoner at a battle on Lake Erie, together with Nathaniel Beasley. They were taken to Chillicothe, in this State, and held for a time as prisoners of war, but preferring our flag and the American Eagle, to the

British Lion, they managed to effect their escape and settled here and became good citizens. It is related of him, that at the time of his wedding they had a dance, as was quite customary then. Uncle Jake had killed a large pig and was roasting him whole before the large fire place in his cabin, hung up by the hind legs, before supper, and while dancing on the puncheon floor, in turning a corner, some one hit the pig and down he came into the fire and ashes. Uncle Jake grabbed the pig by the hind legs and thus addressed him: "*Damm-e pig*, won't you bide up a wedding time?" The pig was soon put in place to roast and the dance went on merrily. One son and one daughter are all that remains of the family here. The Flowers family are all gone and the old home is owned by Isaac Wise. Edwin Barber and wife, the only couple in town now of the original settlers, are still in their quiet home, bowed by the infirmities of years and hard work. Uncle Guy Doolittle, as we all used to call him, has gone to the land of peace, and is doubtless happy, singing those good old Methodist tunes that were the joy of his heart while here, and which we all delighted to hear him so sweetly sing. His aged wife still lingers on this side of the River, prepared at any time to go. She still retains the old homestead. Julius Blake's family are all gone. Philo Taylor and the Gilbreaths are gone. Mr. Stilwell still remains. Uncle Billy Davidson and good old mother Davidson; God bless her for the great good she done while here. What boy or girl in all West Brimfield that doesn't remember the good bread and butter with apple-sauce that she used to give us as we went there on errands, and I apprehend that many of us can remember the doses of *herb tea* we took for the colic, that she used to prepare. If virtue and goodness are to be rewarded in the next world, good old mother Davidson will have a reserved seat. She was not very handsome but good. That little family of eleven persons are all gone but one; he remains an honored citizen of your town, whose munificent gifts and charitable deeds certainly have reflected no discredit on the family name. John Boosinger, Sen., the first resident here, was permitted to live to see most of his pioneer citizens and neighbors pass on to the other shore before him. He lacked but one day of reaching his 90th birthday. His physical endurance was remarkable. His thrilling narratives of the early settlement here, are still fresh in your memories. A lengthened biography of him would interest you, for he was more closely identified with the history of the county than any man in Brimfield. He cleared the ground where now stands the Court House and Jail of your county. He came here in June, 1816, with his wife and two children—Phillip, aged two years, and Catharine, four weeks old. He at first cut and rolled together a few logs for a hut and moved in. No door and no chinking to fill the spaces between the logs. Solitary and alone, being the only residents here and no family within five miles. And now, boys and girls, listen to what I am about to tell you. Mr. Boosinger was called to attend Court at Ravenna, a mother and two helpless babies stayed in the little hut for two days and nights, with dense woods and swamps all around her, filled with bears, panthers, and howling wolves, with no company save a faithful dog. It is said the wolves congregated in large numbers around her cabin and howled all night for human prey. They poked their noses through the cracks, the dog keeping a faithful watch at the door-way. Phillip Boosinger owes his existence, to-day, to the efforts of that old dog. Who will say that a dog has no soul. How do you think that mother felt those dark and lonely nights? How would your young wives now like an experience of that kind? Who has the courage to try it? If such were the common experience of married life to-day, I imagine that the old maids would rapidly multiply. Dea. Harmon Bradley left his farm here and removed to Kent, where he died two years ago, at a ripe old age. Arba Twitchel died many years ago; his son Lambert occupies the old home. Benjamin Hall died many years ago; his son William is still living in Kent. Dea. Henry Hall moved to Hudson, where he died several years since. Reuben Hall's family are all gone. Oliver Sawyer left the old log house many years ago for his pleasant home on the other street. Cone Andrews, on the George Boosinger place, left years ago and died in Mogadore. Dr. Lincoln died forty years ago. Abel Forcha and Hiram King have also been dead many years. Henry Sawyer, who then lived near where the Methodist church now stands, is now a resident of Kent. Martin T. Hackett, Henry Boszer, Nathaniel Beasley

and all who then lived on the north center road, are all gone, and their old homes passed into other hands.

On the south center road there is not one left of the original settlers, and I think no one of their farms are occupied with any of their descendants, except James Moulton and old Mrs. Hockobout, who still remains at her old home, where she has been just 50 years. East, from the center, many of the homes still retain the family name, but not one of the original pioneers remain. Abner H. Lanphare, who died a year ago, was the last of the first settlers in east Brimfield. With his somewhat remarkable history you are all familiar. One of the first here, and one of the last to go. It was thought that with his demise perished the history of Brimfield. Possessed of a clear mind and a remarkable memory, he was conversant with all that pertained, not only to the history of Brimfield, but in fact to the history of the entire county, and much of Northern Ohio. Nature, with him, was lavish in her gifts. A fair scholar, a good talker, he took a deep interest in all that pertained to the interests of your town. One son and one daughter still remain to perpetuate his name. Judge Jerimiah Moulton was an honored citizen who died many years ago. He had a large family, a number of whom are living; his son, William, occupies the old home. The Blakes are all gone. Lybia Underwood and Freeman Underwood, who came here with their parents in 1817, and who have more recently died, were long residents here. Albert Underwood is now living in Ravenna. Jerimiah Pike, who came in 1820, died many years ago; his son, Lyman W., retains the old home. Mrs. Pike survived until two years ago; at her death, she was the oldest person in Brimfield, being over 90. Mr. Pike broke down in health somewhat early. He was a very quiet old gentleman. I apprehend, however, that had he been conscious that he was raising a son who could'n't go to mill without losing his grist, the serenity of his quiet might have been somewhat disturbed. Fathers can't always tell what their sons are coming to. John V. Gardner left his farm, perhaps as early as 1837 or '38, and unfortunately engaged in mercantile business, and the result was what almost invariably follows when a man leaves a good farm to engage in other business, *failure*. He moved to Kent many years ago, and lived to a good old age, being 92 at his death. He was a man of more than ordinary ability, and his pioneer experience was sometimes quite amusing. His advent into this town was in November, 1817. He came with a horse and wagon, in company with Harrison G. Moulton, from Mass. On their journey they left Painesville and came to Ravenna, and from there here; there was no road, only marked trees for a guide. As they got within half a mile of here, on the Boszor hill, it was nearly sundown, and they thought they had lost their way, and must have passed the center where they had heard Dea. Andrews lived. Leaving their women on the hill, they set out in opposite directions in search of some evidence of civilization, each agreeing if any discovery was made to notify the other by hallooing. Moulton took over west and Gardner coming south. Gardner soon saw smoke coming from Uncle Alf's chimney, and gave the alarm, and heard a feeble response from Moulton. They were soon domiciled in Dea. Andrews' cabin, and he said 14 persons slept that night on the cabin floor, besides the children. As an evidence of the courage and pluck that women had in those days, I heard Mrs. Gardner relate to my mother her experience. Her husband had been summoned to court, where he was detained several days, leaving her and her two children entirely alone, there being no neighbor within two miles. The old dog was her only company. Knowing that the wolves would make their accustomed call at night, and knowing that they were afraid of fire, she had busied herself during the day in carrying into her cabin a good lot of barks and dry wood. Night came, and with it the howling wolves. The old dog prepared for battle. A blanket was hung up at the door, and as they approached the door she pulled the blanket aside, and out went the dog. The wolves would run, and as the dog turned to come back the wolves would run him to the door, and again the dog would run them, and so it went, to and fro, all night. The second night the same way. The third night they were determined to come in, and, fearing they would get her little children, she took them and placed them in safety on a puncheon shelf, near the ceiling, and there they slept while she and the dog fought wolves. Mother inquired, "were you not frightened?"

"Lord a massa," said she, "I hadn't time to be frightened." Abel Burt, who settled near them, and who was an acquaintance of Gardner in Mass., had a family of four daughters and two sons. All the children are now living, but only one in town. Washington, the youngest son, now occupies the old home where his father and mother toiled for many long years. Fred. Jones, Martin Edson, Isaac Ives, Huedang Hall and Wm. Smith are all gone. Chas. Smith occupies the home of his parents. In the northeast part of town not one remains who was there 50 years ago, save Mrs. Benjamin Edson. While you see but few remain, those that do are nearly all broken families. I find but three unbroken families now that were married and lived here 50 years ago, who have continued to remain here: Edwin Barber and wife, Reuben Hart and wife, Asa Sawyer and wife, all in the west part of town. Together these three couple have lived for more than half a century. The Angel of Death has fortunately passed by, and they have been permitted to live and witness what changes and improvements have taken place. For more than 50 years they have occupied the same homes they do to-day, all in the same neighborhood. Each can say truthfully that they have had good neighbors. Henry Sawyer and wife, who were married 50 years ago, who were then and for many years residents here, are now living in Kent. Among those who came here with their parents in 1817, and are now living, are Oliver Sawyer, Henry Sawyer, Uriah Sawyer, Mrs. Wm. R. Kelso, Sullivan Moulton, Anson Moulton, Wm. G. Moulton, Mrs. Frederick Williams, Mrs. John Abel, Mrs. Chauncey Tupper, and Albert Underwood. If the history, observations and experiences of these persons could be written in full, what a volume it would present for your study and reflection.

From 1831 to 1840 came the following persons: Col. H. L. Carter, Wm. Sessions, Hiram Ewell, Alvin Needham, Erasmus Needham, Valorous Needham, Williard Thomas, Algemon Thomas, James Furray, old Father Cairier and his son Lucius, George Guiestwite, Conrad Neff, Dr. Samuel Hastings, Wm. R. Kelso, John Kelso, Chas. Edson, David L. Rockwell, Joel Burnett, the Bard family, Leverett Black, Ebenezer Rawson, Porter King, Wm. Meloy, the Stow family, and many others, and finally Cain came also—not the Cain that killed Abel, but a Cain of whom I shall speak in due time. Nearly all of these persons were substantial citizens, some of whom are still living, but many have died here and rest in your cemeteries, and some have removed to other places. Nearly all of them came in the prime of life, and had some means to commence with. I think that in 1840 Brimfield contained a larger population than ever before or since. Nearly every house contained a large family of children. To raise a large family then was fashionable, and honorable as well. But now, alas! how fashion has changed and how folly prevails. Childless and homeless because it is fashionable! Better in the end, and far more profitable, to sing lullaby than opera.

This place was first called Wylestown, in honor of John Wyles, of Brimfield, Mass., one of its proprietors, but in 1818, when the township was regularly organized, it took the name of Thorndike, the name of the other proprietor. To secure this honor, Thorndike agreed to give a public square to the township, but when a deed was called for he replied, "that God had made a beautiful place for a center, but if man got hold of it he would mar it like the devil," and refused to give it. The result was that the citizens petitioned for a change of name, and the court granted it in 1830, and called it Brimfield, again in honor of John Wyles, who secured the ground containing this beautiful park and gave it to the town in after years, largely through the influence of Col. Carter. Thorndike's prophecy did not prove true. This fine town hall, the best in the county, and this beautiful park will remain for many years, a lasting monument to the enterprise and good taste of the intelligent citizens of Brimfield.

After the township was regularly organized, in 1818, the first election was held in April. There were then thirteen voters in town. At that election Henry Thorndike, Champlin Minard and Reuben Hall were elected Trustees; Alpheus Andrews, Clerk; Israel A. Thorndike, Treasurer; Jonathan Thompson, Justice of the Peace; Arba Twitchel and Thomas Tutson, Constables; David Thompson, Assessor; John Boosinger and Henry Boszor, Fence Viewers.

Eleven out of the thirteen legal voters were made officers. What their politics were I can't say.

The first birth in town was Henry Andrews, born the 17th of April, 1817, son of Dea. Alpheus Andrews, to which allusion has already been made. The first death was an infant child of Capt. Uriah Sawyer. The first adult death was that of Porter Walbridge, a brother of Mrs. Jeremiah Pike. He was the first person buried in yonder cemetery. He was not of a very religious turn of mind, quite unlike his nephew, Lyman. It is said that he was an outspoken infidel. Soon after his death Dea. Andrews lost his little boy, the first born, Henry. Uncle Alf. would not allow his boy to be buried in the same ground with Walbridge, assigning as a reason that the devil would probably come for Walbridge, and might make a mistake and get into the wrong grave and get his boy. He was buried in Rootstown.

The first marriage of those living in town was Thomas Tutson and a Miss Durkee. This was a romantic affair, and worth relating. A fellow by the name of Thompson and Miss Durkee had agreed to get married, and Thompson started for Ravenna for a license. Tutson in some way found it out, and during Thompson's absence at Ravenna, went to Miss Durkee and persuaded her to marry him. No time was to be lost. Tutson made known his intentions to Lanphare, who at once arranged the plan. Realizing that delays are often dangerous, and to play a good joke on Thompson, he made haste to invite Sophia Moulton, whom he afterward married, to accompany the party to Ravenna to have the knot duly tied. The two men mounted their horses, taking their girls on behind, and started. On the way they met Thompson on his return, equipped with a license for himself and Miss Durkee. But, oh! how often there is a slip between the cup and the lip. "What does this mean?" enquired Thompson; "what are you doing with my intended wife?" Lanphare, who was undoubtedly spokesman for the party, explained that the girl had changed her mind. The girl blushed, as girls do even at this day, and said she was sorry, but guessed she would go on now that they had got started. Thompson replied that he should certainly die if she didn't have him; but it was of no use; 'twas four against one, and Thompson surrendered. There has been no record of his death, even to this day, so far as I am informed. The first marriage that ever occurred in this town was Abner H. Lanphare to the "girl he had behind him," Miss Sophia Moulton, daughter of Judge Moulton. They were married on the 4th of July, 1819, just sixty-two years ago to-day, by Rev. Simeon Woodruff, of Tallmadge. Sixty years of married life marked the career of the first married couple of your town. The first school taught in town was a private school, taught by Judge Moulton, in his own house. He commenced on the 22d day of Dec., 1818. His second school he commenced on the 13th of Dec., 1819. The first district school was taught by Dea. Henry Hall, in the Capt. Sawyer district. Lanphare taught several winters in different districts.

The first church organized in town was a Presbyterian church, consisting of seven members, to-wit: Jonathan Law and wife, Dea. Alpheus Andrews and wife, Reuben Hall and wife, and Benjamin Malory. This church was organized in 1819, by Rev. Simeon Woodruff, of Tallmadge, at the house of Dea. Andrews. The first Methodist church was organized in 1823, by Elder Eddy, of Hudson, consisting of eight members, to-wit: Benjamin Malory (who withdrew from the Presbyterians) and wife, Amos Benedict and wife, John K. Chapman and wife, and Abner H. Lanphare and wife. The Baptist church, I think, was organized in 1834, by whom I am unable to state; I think, Caleb Green. It consisted of four members, Dea. Harmon Bradley, Martin T. Hackett, and John Taber and wife, who then lived in Mogadore. Mrs. Mary H. Taber, my venerable mother-in-law, is the only person now living of all the persons who became members of the three churches mentioned at their organization. She is now 84 years old, hale and hearty, and writes as plainly and glibly as a girl of 16. Not long ago I received a postal card from her containing 476 words, plainly written. These venerable people who organized your churches, and who have all passed to their final rest, save one, set the rising generation an example worthy of imitation. They did not believe that upholstered seats, or carpeted floors, or gaudy show, were essential to true worship.

The first church building was built in 1834, the modest building being now used by Mr. Bourn for a residence. The Methodist church was built in 1836, the Baptist in 1835, and the First Universalist in 1837. It burned down and was rebuilt in 1868.

Resident ministers here have been very few, Elder Rhodolphus Bard, of the Baptists, Revs. Loring and J. S. Palmer, of the Universalist church. I think there has never been a resident Methodist minister here.

Among the resident physicians were, 1st, Dr. Lincoln, Dr. Stocking, Dr. Gray, Dr. Samuel Hastings, who lived many years with you, but is now a resident of Ravenna. He was both physician and school teacher, as I well remember. He was an excellent physician and a first-class school teacher. I shall never forget the floggings he gave me, once for telling the truth, and once for calling him Dr. Haystacks. For many years you were without a physician here, but now are favored with one, in the person of Dr. McConnel. Lawyers you have never had, and but little use for them. I doubt if a town can be found in Northern Ohio that has had as few law-suits in the last 40 years as Brimfield. Seldom has there ever been a case in County Court from this town. You have always been most emphatically a farming community. Little or no manufacturing has ever been done here, yet in early times you had a manufacturing establishment that is worthy of recording. In 1818, Israel Thorndike and Edward Thorndike started a nail factory in the west part of town, on the little stream where the old saw mill used to stand. The nails were made from Swedes iron, and sold for 18 cents per pound. The difficulty in obtaining iron at that time was a great obstacle to success. What iron they got was shipped to Albany, thence by wagon to Buffalo, from there to Cleveland by lake, and then by wheels again to Brimfield, and made into nails. These were some of the difficulties that early manufacturers had to contend with. The enterprise did not prove a financial success, and was soon abandoned. It is said that this was the first nail factory in the State. The building that was then used for the factory is now used by Mr. Tillman Snyder as a barn. It is a relic worth preserving for its historic interest.

The first postmaster was Capt. Chapman, and the next one Dea. Edward Parsons. The first merchant was Wm. Sessions, who came here in 1833, and built the building on the corner now occupied by Benton Moulton for a dwelling. The first and only hotel was built by Wm. R. Kelso, and is still occupied by his widow.

Brimfield has never been noted for her great men, and yet she has produced many substantial citizens and good business men; many have filled positions of honor and trust in your county. Judge Jeremiah Moulton was Associate Justice for seven years; John V. Gardner was Coroner; Wm. R. Kelso, Commissioner; Rhodolphus Bard, Recorder; Erasmus Needham, Representative; Col. H. I. Carter, County Auditor. In party politics the Democratic party have for 40 years been the dominant party. Some, no doubt, have thought that a change would be desirable, but you have been blessed with good crops, peace and prosperity, even under Democratic rule. In 1840 the Whigs had a small majority here, and for some time the parties were pretty evenly matched. Years ago you had noisier politicians than now. Some of you older men will remember the exciting contest here between D. L. Rockwell and Chas. Edson, for Constable. Excitement ran high, and every voter in town was out. Both were determined to win. Rockwell was so certain that he should win that he even bet a dollar with Edson that Mrs. Rockwell would sleep with the Brimfield constable election night. On counting the votes, you can imagine Rockwell's chagrin when he found that Edson was 9 votes ahead of him. Edson, in great glee, demanded of Rockwell, before the crowd, to *bring on his wife*. Rockwell's response was, "I'll stay in Brimfield until the town is redeemed." It hasn't yet been redeemed, and Rockwell is no longer a politician.

I promised to say something to you concerning that notable character, Cain. Want of time will prevent more than a hasty sketch of him. Wm. Cain, whom most of you well remember, was, as he said, a native of the Isle of Man. I doubt whether he or any one ever knew when or where he was born. He was verily a genius of the first water. According to his tell he had in his time visited all the countries of the Old World and wandered among the ruins of by-gone

ages, for at least 150 years before he came to America. What he hadn't actually seen himself, he heard tell of, and could prove all that he said he had seen "by more nor 40 men." His advent into Brimfield was about 1834. He used to relate his experiences in the Old World in an interesting manner and would graphically describe what he had seen. He was a firm believer, he said, in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. He thought that as soon as the soul left the body here, it immediately entered some animal. During his residence here he had a severe fit of sickness and thought that he should die and soon manifest himself in a huge toad. Valorous Needham, I think it was, who suggested that he would not have to change shape or color much. Cain said that he had the best memory of any man living, for he could tell within a week, of just where he had spent his life. He had traveled more than any other man and knew just where he had been and just how long he stayed in each place. One night in giving his history, Porter Pike took notes of his travels in Europe, and finally Cain brought up here; some one said, "Cain, how old do you call yourself?" 44, was his reply. Pike replied, "Cain, you must be older." "May be you know my age better nor I do," said Cain. "My figures don't make you 44." Pike read over the places where Cain said he had been and the time he tarried in each place. Cain says, "True, every word of it, how much do you make it, Porter?" "One hundred and forty-seven," said Pike. Cain replied, "It is just as I tell you, gentlemen, I don't care what figures say." He said that the houses in the old country where he had been, were very high. It was a common thing to build them a hundred feet high. He remembered seeing a public building that was a hundred feet to the eaves and it had a steeple above that of 360 ft. and on it was a weather vane. At one time it got out of order and no one dare go up to fix it. Finally one of his countrymen came along and offered to climb it and put it in shape for \$25. The money was soon raised and the man went to the top of it like a cat. He soon fixed it, and as he started to come down his foot slipped and the man dropped straight down and just as he was passing the eaves of the building he grabbed into the cornice with his teeth and hung there until they put up a ladder and took him down. Cain said it loosened his teeth a little, but they soon got set again. He said that most people thought *this* a great country for vegetables, but it didn't begin with *his* country. He had seen cabbage heads there "more nor the size of a pork barrel" and his father grafted two apple scions into a cabbage stump one Fall and the third year it had "more nor 40 bushels of good apples on that tree." He said that he had seen honey bees there the size of a common sheep in this country and he could prove that by "more than 40 good men."

And now, my friends, you have heard enough of Cain and enough from me. Before I conclude I desire to bring before you a matter that I trust will find a generous response in the minds of every citizen of your township and all others who are in any way interested in perpetuating the names and memories of those who cleared the forests, made your public highways and done so much for those who now live and for your children, and children's children who may come after you. We all know how easy it is to forget, even the most important things are easily forgotten and pass away like dew before the morning sun.

How long, fellow citizens, do you think it will be before the names of John Boosinger and Arba Twitchel, the first two men, who, 65 years ago, commenced clearing the forests, where, to-day, wave beautiful fields of golden wheat. How long, I say, will it be before their names will be unmentioned and they entirely forgotten? How many generations will pass, think you, before the name of Abner H. Lanphare will be forgotten? Or the names of Capt. Uriah Sawyer, or Guy Doolittle, or Abel Burt, or Judge Moulton and 50 others I might mention; are any of you, children or descendants of these men willing that it should be so?

As you have no written history of Brimfield, a comparatively short time will elapse when there will be a community here, not one of whom can mention the name of a pioneer settler, *not one*. It is true, they may go into your quiet cemeteries here and read the names of John Boosinger, Dr. Lincoln, Asa Sawyer, Capt. Uriah Sawyer, Guy Doolittle, Abner H. Lanphare and Lybia Underwood, but they will say I never knew them nor even heard of them before, and pass on without attaching any importance to their names. I have already

said that the names of these pioneer heroes should be inscribed on imperishable granite and transmitted to coming generations, that they may know to whom they are indebted.

And now, citizens of Brimfield, I offer you a suggestion that I know ought and I believe will, meet your most hearty and united approval, and that is, that you erect, in this beautiful park, a memorial granite monument, dedicated to Brimfield's pioneers, upon which shall be inscribed the name of the head of every family who lived in Brimfield 50 years ago to-day, and also the names of all pioneers who had died previous to that date, with the date of their arrival in town. In doing this you will simply do your duty. I present you here the cut of a granite monument 18 feet high, which, to my mind, would be appropriate. On its four square surfaces can be inscribed at least 50 names and perhaps more. That will probably cover the number of families then in town. This monument will not cost, I think, over \$600, a small sum for so valuable a memorial. This sum can be raised by voluntary contributions, or in any way you may deem best. It will only need sixty contributors; at \$10 a piece. You may count me as one of them and two if necessary. A monument of this kind will keep green in your memories and all who come after you, the names of the men and women who made it possible for you, people of Brimfield, to meet here to-day to enjoy yourselves. Fifty years ago, and now, what a marvelous change! who can fully comprehend it? On the morrow, as you enter the meadow and the wheat fields, think of it. Fifty, yes even 30 years ago, your fathers were in these same fields with the old scythe, the sickle and the old cradle, picking up the grass or the wheat around the stumps, filling their hands with thistles and briars, sweating and working for weeks to secure the harvest. How, to-day, the reaper and the mower, the self-binder and the improved thresher will gather your crops and the old-time harvest has been transformed into comparatively a pastime. The inventive genius of man has robbed old-time methods of the daily routine of laborious toil and made the hay and harvest field almost a place of joy. The old ox cart has given way to the two-horse wagon and fine carriages, and the old stool and plain hard chair, on which your fathers and mothers used to sit, to the easy upholstered chairs, now in all your homes. The old hard straw bed, to the comfortable hair mattress, and the luxuries of life are daily on all your tables. And yet you are not satisfied. How ungrateful is the human heart and how unsatisfactory after all, is human life. Something better is continually being sought for. Let us all learn to be content with what we have here, using wisely and well what we have, always hoping that the something better awaits us to be enjoyed in the life beyond.

THE END.





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